CALFED OPERATIONS COORDINATION GROUP
JANUARY 13, 1999 MEETING NOTES AND ACTION ITEMS

Review of December 9 meeting notes

Under the Fishery Status section, the last sentence of the Spring-Run Chinook Salmon sub-section could be misunderstood when it stated that "No chinook in the spring-run size range have been captured at the facilities this season." The implied size range was in reference to the Delta Model curves that cover young-of-the-year chinook only. It may be possible that yearling spring-run have been captured at the facilities.

Announcements

DWR Unit Citation Awards were presented to members of the Data Assessment Team.

The following handouts were provided at the meeting:

1. SWP Operations Package, DWR, J. Snow
2. DWR 1999 Water Year Forecast as of January 1, 1998, USBR, J. Burke
3. USBR's 1999 VAMP Forecasted Flows and Exports, USBR, J. Burke
4. Preliminary results of AFRP Delta Action 8, USFWS, M. Kjelson
5. Delta Smelt Fall Midwater Trawl Abundance Index, DFG, D. Sweetnam
6. Splittail Abundance and Distribution Update, DFG, R. Baxter
7. CALFED Revised Phase II Report, CALFED, S. Buer

Operations

DMC Outage: In October of 1992 the San Luis Delta-Mendota Water Authority took over responsibility for the maintenance of the Tracy Pumping Plant and the Delta-Mendota Canal. The Authority decided to use the favorable hydrologic conditions existing this winter to perform urgently needed structural repairs and maintenance on normally inaccessible portions of the Canal.

The major structural work done was the replacement of the three radial gates at the Check 2 site three miles south of the Tracy Pumping Plant. Complete replacement was required due to the observed decay of major structural members of the gates. The gates that were removed will be completely rehabilitated and used to replace the remaining gates. This portion of the canal had not been dewatered since the early 1980's.

Other major structural work included shotcrete repair of concrete lining on the canal, turnout pipeline replacement, replacement of reinforced concrete panels on the Westley Wasteway storm drain, and crack repair at an O' Neill Pumping Plant enclosure tube.

Soundings were performed on the intake channel to Tracy Pumping Plant to determine the quantity of silt accumulated, although results were not yet available.

Other minor work included the cleaning out of all turnouts, replacement of some of the turnout gates, modernization of the controls for the Tracy Fish Facility trash rack, and other rehabilitation / repair work in the Tracy Pumping Plant.

CVP/SWP Operations Status: Releases to the Trinity River have been restored to 500 cfs after a decrease to 300 cfs uncovered salmon redds. This higher level of release will continue into May causing undetermined impacts to CVP water deliveries.

With minimal flood releases, New Melones Reservoir is the only CVP reservoir currently being controlled by flood control criteria. All upstream AFRP target releases are being met.

Tracy Pumping Plant is scheduled to increase its pumping rate to 5 units or 4200 cfs beginning today, January 13. The USBR believes it will fill its 100 taf vacancy in San Luis Reservoir this year unless it stays dry.

The DWR is encroached into the USBR's portion of San Luis storage by about 10,000 AF and plans to increase this amount over the next few weeks as long as the water is available from the Delta. This water will eventually be released to refill lost storage in the SWP's southern reservoirs caused by outages on both the east and west branches of the California Aqueduct. The east branch outage is for a scheduled lining repair, while the west branch outage is due to an emergency repair of damaged aqueduct. Both branches should be back in service by late February or early March.

Delta Operations Criteria: The January 1 forecast of the 1999 water year type index for the Sacramento Valley decreased from the December 1 forecast. The January 1 forecast indicates an above normal year type at the 50% exceedence level and a below normal year type at the 90% exceedence level. Based on this updated forecast the D-1485 Suisun Marsh flow standard may be controlling operations in the near future if Delta outflow continues to decline. This standard calls for 60 consecutive days of 12,000 cfs for Delta outflow in the January

through April period in above and below normal year types. The 12,000 cfs outflow requirement is not triggered for dry and critical year types.

San Joaquin River / VAMP: The forecasted 1999 water year type index for the San Joaquin Valley is also significantly drier in the January 1 forecast as compared to the December 1 forecast. The forecast shows a below normal year type at the 50% exceedence level and a critical year type at the 90% level of exceedence. This year's classifications would produce the following parameters for the VAMP:

	90%	50%
San Joaquin 60/20/20 Index Forecast	2.1	3
Hydrologic Classification	Critical	Below Normal
1998+1999 60/20/20 Indicator	6	8
Single or Double step in 1999	Single	Double
Forecasted Vernalis Base Flow (cfs)		
April 15-30	3,000	4,800
May 1-15	2,800	4,500
Target Flow (cfs)	3,200	7,000
Water needed to meet target (TAF)	22	142
Combined CVP/SWP Export target (cfs)	1,500	3,000

In 1999, only a Critical Year classification would result in a "single step" target flow, all other classifications will result in a "double step" target flow. Depending on what base flows are, more than 110 taf may be needed to achieve the double step target flow. Forecasts will be updated at least monthly. Minor changes in the water supply index could cause major changes to the 1999 Operations Plan so a wide range of plans is desirable to deal with the uncertainty.

1999 Operations Plan: The plan as first presented in the October 1998 showed 138 taf of export impacts using 50% hydrology exceedence for Water Year 1999 and 90% hydrology exceedence for WY 2000. The most recent update of the plan is now expressed in terms of two separate studies with 50% and 90% hydrology exceedences applied throughout the entire period of the plan (through March 2000).

The 90% study includes re-operation that shifts 58 taf of export impact upstream to Lake Shasta and presents a San Luis Reservoir storage low point concern due to AFRP Delta Action 7, implementation of July export based on X2 location and June exports.

The 50% study shows 36 taf of export impact and 74 taf of impact shifted upstream to Lake Shasta and Lake Oroville storage.

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Both studies borrow MWD storage in Castaic Lake to help with San Luis Reservoir low point storage and both studies recover part of Lake Shasta and Lake Oroville storage impact with extraction of groundwater storage from Kern and Semitropic water banks in the year 2000 if necessary.

Temporary Barriers: DWR is optimistic about completing the permitting process for the installation of the head of Old River barrier by the pulse flow period beginning April 15. The barrier has been designed with six 48" culverts with the installation being possible under flow conditions of 5,000 cfs or below on the San Joaquin River. Installation of the Old River and Middle River agricultural barriers, already permitted under separate permits, would be required if the HOR barrier is installed. If the HOR barrier is not installed the agricultural barriers may not be installed until June.

Delta Action 8: On December 1 and 2 of 1998, 65,000 and 50,000 Coleman late-fall smolts were released at Georgiana Slough and Ryde, respectively. Ten to twenty minute tows were conducted at Chipps Island for 14 days following the release. One day was missed due to extreme fog. Less Georgiana fish were captured than Ryde fish resulting in a preliminary Georgiana / Ryde ratio of 0.23. Also, Georgiana fish arrived at Chipps Island several days later than Ryde fish.

Preliminary results from the second phase of this year's experiment, with releases occurring in late December, should be available at the February CALFED Operations Group meeting.

Fishery Status

Spring-Run / Steelhead Biological Assessment: DWR and USBR staff are working with NMFS and DFG staff to complete a Biological Assessment for Central Valley steelhead and spring-run Chinook salmon. This assessment covers existing CVP and SWP facilities and operations for the period October 1998 through March 2000. After the Biological Assessment is complete, NMFS and DFG will begin the formal consultation process toward a federal Biological Opinion and State take permit. A federal draft B.O. could be completed by late March or early April and the final document by late April or May. A CESA 2081 permit could be issued by late April. These schedules are being reviewed by staff and could change.

Spring-Run Chinook Salmon: The number of fry observed in upper Butte Creek has increased to several thousand per day since the beginning of the year. There were low numbers observed in lower Butte Creek. There were several

days during which a small fraction of the catch was yearlings. Some of the upstream fry were tagged with coded wire tags with the hopes of recovery downstream to learn more about spring-run timing.

Winter-Run Chinook Salmon: The preliminary estimate for the juvenile escapement estimate at Red Bluff Diversion Dam is 482,114. This value yields 1% - yellow light and 2% - red light concern levels of 4,821 and 9,642, respectively. These values may be revised after the IEP winter-run project work team considers carcass count numbers provided by DFG.

Steelhead: NO REPORT

Delta Smelt: The final midwater trawl abundance index for December was 70.1 which results in a final 1998 index of 417.6. The 1998 index along with the 1997 index of 360.8 seem to have broken an apparent pattern of an odd/even cycle in the 1990s. Beginning in 1991 odd year indexes have ranged between the high 600s to over 1000 whereas even year indexes have ranged between 100 and 200.

Splittail: The fall midwater trawl survey produced record high values for splittail abundance this year. Two of the last four years have been excellent recruitment years. For a fourth year in a row, significant numbers have been produced in the San Joaquin River system. Floodplain inundation in areas such as the Sutter and Yolo Bypasses appear to provide the best explanation for increased abundance in high outflow years. The geographical distribution of splittail is much broader than previously believed and continues to expand as more information is gathered.

SWRCB

The Bay-Delta water right hearing is currently in its 45th day. Phase 5 dealing with southern Delta salinity and dissolved oxygen ended in December. Phase 2A, dealing with the responsibility of parties to meet San Joaquin River Agreement began Monday, January 11.

The USBR submitted two petitions for joint point of diversion in November. The first petition, (approved November 30), allowed CVP pumping at the Banks Pumping Plant in December. A total of 14 taf was pumped under this petition. The second petition for JPOD pumping in calendar year 1999 has not been approved. Three outstanding issues still remain:

1) Improved accounting method illustrating no net increase in CVP diversion.
2) Requirement for a South Delta Water Agency response plan (covered by Order WR 98-9).
3) Consensus approval among fishery agencies.

ACTION ITEM: The NNG was delegated the responsibility of resolving these three outstanding issues.

Revised CALFED Phase II Report

The Revised Phase II Report distributed December 18 provides documentation of CALFED's Draft Preferred Program Alternative. Key points of the draft include: water management strategy, the Environmental Water Account, approach to storage, and the approach to conveyance.

Water management objectives:

- Reduce diversion conflicts
- Decrease drought impacts on environmental flows and agricultural/urban supply
- Increase operational flexibility
- Increase supply utility (water quality)
- Short-term and long-term transfers
- Conservation (agricultural, urban, & wetlands)
- Recycling
- Groundwater and surface storage
- Watershed management
- Water quality control
- Monitoring and real-time diversion management

The EWA combines certainty of prescriptive standards with the flexibility of active and adaptive management.

CALFED's position on storage is that new storage will be developed and constructed, together with aggressive implementation of water conservation, recycling, and a protective water transfer market, as appropriate to meet CALFED Program goals.

CALFED's strategy on conveyance is to develop a through-Delta conveyance alternative based on existing Delta configuration with some modifications,

evaluate its effectiveness, and add additional conveyance and/or other water management actions if necessary to achieve CALFED goal and objectives.

Phase III of the CALFED Bay-Delta Program will begin implementation of the preferred program alternative following the completion of the Final Programmatic EIS/EIR for Phase II (expected to be completed late 1999). Stage 1 of the implementation plan includes a list of proposed actions for the first seven years of the implementation program.

No Name Group

The NNG was asked by CALFED to recommend water supply and water quality measures that are capable of being implemented within the Stage 1 (first 7 years) of the Program.

Future topics the NNG may need to watch for include AFRP Actions, E/I ratio in February and X2 days in March. The newly delegated responsibility of resolving outstanding JPOD issues is likely to take precedence in the immediate future.

Agenda items for Next Meeting . . . February 17